

# This Old House

**32**  
stress-free  
**paint combos**  
for every  
space

**Refresh  
your rooms  
with  
color**

best  
low-cost  
upgrade  
p. 56

**BONUS  
SECTION!  
DIY  
decorating  
ideas**

**Easy how-to**  
space-saving coat rack  
new shine for worn wood floors  
handsome sideboard  
from stock cabinets

NOVEMBER 2009

THISOLDHOUSE.COM



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PHOTO  
SHOP



## COLOR ISSUE

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on the cover



Get the look of your kitchen with color. 20-22, 24-25. Or, choose the color combinations for every space. 40-43, 48. Easy! See it.

Cover Photography: Scott Gifford



400000000

Make the most of your radiator's real estate by turning it into a cozy window-seat comfort zone.



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# ASK SHERWIN-WILLIAMS WHERE BABIES COME FROM.

Children grow from each other into, well, men. They also inherit a lot from their parents. So, the next time you're looking for a new paint color, think about the colors that your children will be growing up with. Sherwin-Williams has a lot of colors to choose from. So, when you're looking for a new paint color, think about the colors that your children will be growing up with. Sherwin-Williams has a lot of colors to choose from.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/STOCK PHOTO; STYLING: JESSICA K. HARRIS; HAIR: JESSICA K. HARRIS; MAKEUP: JESSICA K. HARRIS

# thisoldhouse.com

## 10 tips for surviving the holidays with your kitchen—and your sanity—intact

PLANNING & IDEAS ▶ HOW-TO & REPAIR ▶ TOOLS & PRODUCTS ▶ GIVE & GET ADVICE



Smart kitchen storage for the stuff you use once a year



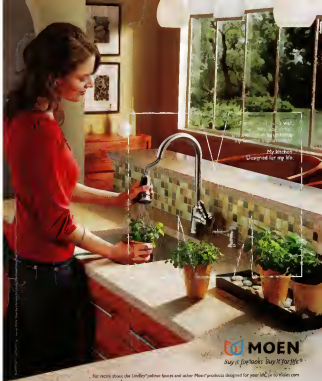
Get inspired: 28 amazing dining rooms



Check out ranges that do the work for you

[thisoldhouse.com/thanksgiving](http://thisoldhouse.com/thanksgiving)

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John & Ann  
Fisher, Silver Spring, MD

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**ASK THE EXPERT**

With NKBA member  
Jennifer L. Oliver, CDD

Why should I hire an NKBA-certified designer?

Choosing the right designer is crucial in order to create a beautiful and functional kitchen or bathroom. By selecting an NKBA-certified designer, you know that you'll be working with a professional who's educated and experienced in kitchen and bath design and construction, as well as in mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems. NKBA-certified designers also recognize the importance of consumer health and safety when designing a space and install current or local building codes and regulations. **33**

For a stunning kitchen or bathroom that meets all of your expectations, choose a designer certified by the NKBA.

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To find an NKBA-certified designer in your area, visit [NKBA.org/FindAPro](http://NKBA.org/FindAPro)

Ask John Graham & Beth Day, Inc. (NKBA)  
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Written by Jennifer L. Oliver, CDD

**"Working with an NKBA professional, we have our dream kitchen and increased the value of our home."**

— John & Ann Fisher, Silver Spring, MD

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4. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1997, 34, 1, 1-14.

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1000

## A man is sitting on a couch, holding a fan of color swatches. He is surrounded by various paint cans and brushes, suggesting a painting project or a color selection process. The scene is set indoors, with a window in the background showing some greenery.

Oil craves with my luck that color will grow up to be Cane.

Scott C. McLaughlin  
SCOTT C. McLAUGHLIN  
ATTORNEY

1. **The Slavery** is the first part job. [p. 10]
2. **The three seals** FOR general contractor Tom Slavery every house owner should have. [p. 44]
3. **How from press** will revitalize the economy. [p. 10]

# readermail



**Think TOW readers are** likely to bunker down for a cold and icy winter? Think again. Instead, they're summering up old D/I projects like there's no tomorrow, whether it's some energy-saving measures to weather the steps of our magazine or a full-on restoration of a 100-year-old house. And, I'm sorry, I don't work in it. You're also an estate hunter, offering us hot safety concerns in a September issue story and launching a discussion on the importance of affordable home improvement budgets.

#### One corner we wasn't out

We're canceling our magazine, which means we can't save money—but not The Old House. We've located no money in your life and think that one house is finally taking shape. Like September's "Fix Nine, Save A Lot! Love," which gave

how to reach us

The editors: The Old House magazine, 135 West 12th Street, New York, NY 10011. It's a great TOW idea, and we'll send a 100-year-old house address and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

us plenty of ideas to keep costs down, save for the holidays—and stay busy! —TOM COX, CHICAGO

#### Safety check

You publish a wonderful magazine, but as I've read September's Question of the Month (Ask This Old House), I couldn't help but notice that in some of the photos the reader's device (cell) has a badly frayed cord. It should be noted that electric shock can be just as dangerous as catching that heavy door. The cord should be replaced.

—DAVID WILSON, GREENSBORO, NC

**The editors reply:** You're absolutely right. Don't—ever—catch. For an on-the-spot fix, wrap the frayed bit of cord with electrical tape, overlapping the tape as you wrap it. To replace

a cord, we recommend that you contact the cord's manufacturer.

#### Money matters

I've been pleasantly surprised by my latest issues of TOW, which seem to address budgetary concerns far more than usual. But it seems that the homeowners on the TV show rarely worry about their budgets, housing all setbacks and emergencies with big smiles on their faces. I hope TOW TV will be sensitive to viewers and address these issues from now on.

—SCOTT LINDENBERG, HARTFORD, CT

**The editors reply:** We hear you, Scott. Smart budgeting is crucial, especially these days. The remote costs aren't always discussed on TOW TV at the price for labor and materials vary

widely from place to place. And since the program is shown as syndicated years after the original broadcast, we refrain from discussing prices, since they may change significantly from year to year.

#### Our house, your show

We just purchased a house in upstate New York that was built in 1900. Minor improvements or updates have been done to it over the past 100 years. We thought it might be a great job for your crew to tackle. Interested?

—NICKEL AND DIM, GENESEE, NY

**The editors reply:** This is by far the most frequently asked question that we get. You can find out if our TOW TV's prices for choosing houses at the old house.com website.



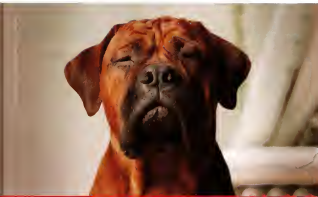
#### Our spot of tranquility

ANY HOME EDUCATION, FLA. We finally got around to building the stone fountain that you featured in a house in your June 2007 issue. We're enjoying sitting quietly and listening to the water bubble down the stones!

## AL SAYS, "DOGS IN STROLLERS? DESIGNER DOG FOODS? WAKE ME WHEN IT'S OVER."

#### AL'S THE VOICE OF REAL DOGS.

He thinks it's time for a little common sense. Time to get back to where mud is for tracking. Squirrels are for chasing. And bowls are for the meaty-tasting goodness of 100% complete and balanced ALPO. REAL DOGS EAT MEAT.





# checklist { November 09 }

## EASY WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

### □ Gather kindling

As you begin the test of the fall leaves, stock your grill for fire starters that will help you get cherry blazes going all season long. Look for low-hanging dead branches and fallen limbs about the thickness of a pencil. Cut them to size, if necessary, then store inside or under a tarp outside to allow them to dry out.



### □ Seal stone countertops

Don't let those inevitable pills and splashes from your Thanksgiving feast leave a permanent scar on your prep surfaces. Protect granite and marble with an impregnating sealer and let dry for at least 2 hours. If you've got soapstone counters, apply mineral oil and then wipe off the excess.



## TOH TIP

### □ Quick tune-up: Clean the fridge's coils

The holiday season's here, and you know what that means—need greater fuel efficiency. To make sure they stay fresh, empty your fridge and pull it out from the wall, then move the back cover and vacuum the coils and bottom vents. Use a brush attachment to loosen dirt and push it to the edge.

### □ Tackle paint touch-ups

Spit up your walls for company by covering all these little scuffs and marks. Stain left over paint through chevron and pine into a plastic cup. Then use a small, angled artist's brush to dab it on, working from the outside in to blend the new color with the surrounding paint. Make this a family project—one person per room—and you'll get it done in a flash. For more painting tips, visit [thisoldhouse.com/tohus](http://thisoldhouse.com/tohus).



### □ Unclog your gutters

Trust us, you don't want to deal with the flooding that could follow a build-up of dead leaves and debris in your gutters. If you tackle

the job yourself, be sure to follow these safety tips:  
• Make sure your ladder is sturdy and has a railed surface. Identify the ladder's rated weight and post your max load by about 5 feet.  
• Wear nonslip shoes and heavy work gloves.  
• Use a tool belt (or hook a tool belt bucket to the ladder) to keep your gear close and within reach.  
• For proper balance, keep your feet on the ladder at all times. If your belt buckle points beyond either rail, you're leaning too far.

### □ What's on your checklist?



"The adding materials to the basement floor is a cold walk, but cold is the best time to do it. I'm a fan of the cold. I'm a fan of the cold." —Betsy Smith, Managing Editor, *True Value*. Send us your checklist ideas at [truetohouse.com/tonus](mailto:truetohouse.com/tonus).



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1.2  
hours

Average  
time we  
spend eating  
Thanksgiving  
dinner



## Future remodelers get real-world prep

Many home flippers are jolted to make a buck. But the new "Green and Red Project" in Glen Rock, New Jersey, teaches tomorrow's remodelers to balance the benefits of eco-friendly building with the realities of budget and schedule in real-estate development (thus the project's name). Set to begin in 2010, the project is a hands-on apprenticeship for two teams of high-school students. The project will also help renovate the neighborhood. The two work-along sub-contractors while making remodeling decisions about whether to use eco-friendly materials, and even get a share of the proceeds from selling furniture they've salvaged or built for the project.



3.7  
hours

Average time  
we spend  
watching TV on  
Thanksgiving  
Day



## Stay safe during peak fire season

The good news: Your likelihood of being involved in a fire is one-twelfth what it was 50 years ago, according to a new study. The bad news: Thanksgiving remains the biggest day of the year for smoking-related fires, with nearly 3,300 fires during the week of the holiday alone annually. Here's what you can do to avoid a cooking catastrophe and cut safety with fire tips.

- Keep flammable items, such as pot holders and towels, away from burners.
- Use a Class A/B/C-rated fire extinguisher nearby—Cans be used on paper, grease, and electrical fires—and never throw a lit match of time.
- If a dish catches fire in the oven, never open the door to reveal the fire. Keep the door closed, turn off the heat, and wait for the flames to die down.
- If all else fails, a frying pan, turn off the burner and smother the fire with a baking powder or putting out the pan on a damp towel. If you splash and make serious injury.

## APPLIANCE WATCH

We're  
freezing  
more food

With the purchase of major appliances dropped almost 30 percent in the fourth year, sales of stand-alone freezers were up more than 10 percent. Experts say it's not unusual for people to buy room bulk food and freezer. It's a tough economy. In response, Frigidaire and Electrolux have rolled out new models with more interior options, such as pull-out bins and adjustable shelves.

**NEWSFLASH** → Homeowner Eric Rotondo is suing the city of Detroit for knocking down his tree upon which a municipal cleanup crew spiked for a abandoned house.



## Picture this

Mack & Decker's Smart Select family of power tools eliminates guesswork by featuring tool icons, instead of a numeric scale. It helps you dial in the correct power or speed setting for drilling, sawing, and other DIY duties. \$40-\$55. MackandDecker.com

Reporting by Keith Pridemore and Nicole Kuznetsov

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If you could design your dream window,  
what would it be?



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P. Allen Smith  
Garden Home Designer



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# home solutions

Edited by Deborah Sincavage

inside

1-HOUR FIXES

PAINTING TOOLS

PROTECT SHRUBS

MORE



4 SMART IDEA

## Warmed-up window seat

Older houses often have radiators tucked under windows on the sill, and while they certainly do the job, they also take up precious floor space that you can easily transform this spot into a cozy little reading nook with a view. Just box in the radiator with a polycarbonate or PVC cover and add a few comfy throw pillows. Make sure the seat narrows just above the top of the radiator—so that you won't get scratched—and that the surround is nailed to framed-in wall for sturdiness. Don't be surprised if your new window seat becomes a hangout spot for the kids. It's a perfect place to daydream.



make one yourself  
When kids grow up, make a window seat for them. It's a perfect place to daydream.

## DECORATING

## Make odd seats look like a set

It's November, and that means it's time to dust out your collection of informal chairs so that you're not a big crowd at the Thanksgiving table. Before the big feast, give each piece your best shot: a vibrant new coat with a coat of paint and second-to-none end seat, apron-style. The double-bit is a less tedious step (just make sure the backrest is secure and smooth before transferring the design) and paint it easily when the table is in place. **It's a Chair's Chair Chair, \$30 for a set of six, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com). —HEIDI ANDERSON**

## 4 TIME SAVERS

## Products that make painting easier

It may be a simple DIY project, but painting can eat up a good chunk of a day if you're tackling a big area or doing a lot of detail work. These affordable new tools help make the job go more quickly and, we hope, more smoothly as well.

—NATALIE KOSOWSKI



**Any cleaning.** Soaking brushes inside the bucket, along with some paint and primer—like a little old wash for your brushes. **Paint, \$30, [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).**



**Power painter.** This handheld, dual-speed sprayer has a variable trigger that delivers a fast, fan-shaped spray pattern for go-go results. **Wagner, \$80, [wagnerpower.com](http://wagnerpower.com).**



**Roller rolling.** This battery-powered pole machine paints right from the car through a special attachment, saving set-up time and covering a 7-by-10-door area in one go. **Wagner, \$60, [wagnerpower.com](http://wagnerpower.com).**

24 more paint tips and how-to projects in the new book *Painting with a Pro*

## QUICK FIXES

## 4 UPKEEP

## 60-minute repairs

Since you can sleep late to celebrate a little saving time on November 1, let's why not use the time to take on a nagging little project that perpetually falls to the bottom of your to-do list? To get you motivated, here are a few of our favorite ideas for this month.

—NATALIE KOSOWSKI

**Clean a clogged burner.** Use a toothpick to poke out any food or oil that has built up on the burner holes. Scrub the burner parts with a solution of equal parts warm water and baking soda.

**Tighten loose chair legs.** Add a dab of epoxy to a wobbly leg, hold it in place with a hand clamp or two, and let it dry completely.

**Repair a blister in a vinyl floor.** Remove the blister and fill with a vinyl patching compound. Mix the compound, then weigh down the spot and let it dry. If you don't have a patching compound handy,

an artist's brush or corner wheel brush can be used to fill the hole.

**Fix a sticky sliding closet door.** Unscrew and carefully lift out the door. After cleaning the wheels, lubricate with a silicone spray to prevent dirt and dust from getting themselves in the future.

**Touch up a wood table.** Use a thin brush to touch up any chips or scratches. Get rid of any water rings by rubbing them with a cloth of toothpaste before buffing clean.



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Be sure you can slide the screen out of the way to access what's behind them.

4 UPDATES

## A display-station disguise

Electrical panels, thermostats, light switches—they're household necessities, but under wraps. Hide them with free, frock-free doors and screens (available at [diy.com/home-ware](http://diy.com/home-ware)), screens, or use a sliding board instead. Here's how to: (1) Cut out a hole in the board that fits the panel (also called "face frame"). Install the board above and below the device and cover. (2) Cut two pieces of colored panel board to fit. Coat one with chalkboard paint, cover the other with self-stick wallpaper. (3) Use the same hardware to fasten panels to each track so that they can slide behind each other. —DIANE MORRIS



4 DIGITAL AIDS

## Help with hues



With thousands of options to choose from, picking paint colors might just be one of the toughest (and most anxiety-inducing) home-improvement tasks. Luckily, there are tools to simplify things, so you no longer drown in a sea of swatch cards.

—PATRICIA HENDON

**Just get it right where Color Smart**

[www.colors.com](http://www.colors.com)

The interactive website prompts you with photos to help you pick your favorite shades, a slider lets you fine-tune your color choices.

**pick out pleasing points Color Trends Gallery**

[www.colors.com](http://www.colors.com)

Prefabricated color palettes inspired by nature, travel, and other themes are paired with multicolored schemes, providing an unconventional way to find the hues you're drawn to.

**no-drama color on your walls Personal Color Viewer**

[www.colors.com](http://www.colors.com)

"Enter" the walls of sample photos provided on this website to see how mix-and-match options look. (Or a \$10 fee, you can upload your own images to the site.)

**get a paint color match ColorSnap**

[www.colors.com](http://www.colors.com)

From the app store or iTunes, a genius idea from Sherwin-Williams. Take a photo with your iPhone and simply tap on the color you like. Their app will show you the closest color match in the company's line.

## YARD TIPS

4 FALL PROJECTS

## Winterize shrubs

Evergreen shrubs can withstand frozen, bathing snowed after seasons of supporting landscape with less care than deciduous plants. But the Old Farmer's Almanac's author Roger Cook shares these late-November prep tips to help your hedge make it to spring damage-free. —JULIE VILKUS

**WINDSCREEN** Shrubs that are protected from the wind are less likely to be damaged by strong winds. Cover them by hammering a stake into the ground to make a frame, then wrap with burlap and staple the material to the stakes.

**SNOW AND ICE PROTECTION** Shrubs can be damaged by a light coating of snow, but a heavy snow or ice coating can be a problem. Shrub plants up against your house from falling icicles and snow melt can be damaged. A frame of stakes that you

can make from stakes and exterior grade plywood

**SALT BARRIER** Road deicers can damage your shrubs. Use a barrier made of mulch or straw and work on control salt to the best extent you can to keep shrubs safe.

**FROST PREVENTION** Repeated freezing and thawing can split shrubs that are heavily coated or mulched with heavy mulch. Use a salt barrier to keep shrubs from the base of shrubs.



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➔ **A farmhouse sink** adds a vintage touch to the cooking space, which has no shortage of modern conveniences. (via [Houzz](#))



• **A pass-through cabinet** at one end of the kitchen gives extra functional backsplash: channel light through the kitchen and provide easy access to glassware stored near the dishwasher.

• The arched opening to the dining room is framed with glistering Lustrush Stone™, an existing arched opening in the kitchen that leads to the main hall.



- after

before

The 125-square-foot room was poorly lit and, with the bridge and nookups in opposite corners and no place to go other than outside for fresh air, it was uncomfortable.



Cooking and entertaining become easier with more space: distinct work zones, casual seating, and clever storage in the dining room.

**2. Created an arched opening** in the wall between the kitchen and dining room, yielding additional space for the work zone to the table and side line from the front of the house to the back.

**5. Filled in a doorway**  
In places space is a three-sided white-noise wall.

**4. Added an island**  
with a raised platform to make group and cleanup a cinch. Seating on the family room side helps keep children parallel seating (not clustered) out of the room's way.

2. **Gained space** by annexing the pantry and back entry/porch adding 30 square feet and creating a niche for the house.

**It removed a wall** to open up the kitchen to a new family room creating just enough space for the kitchen bar we loved.



**Keywords:** child sexual abuse; disclosure; social support



• **Colorful glass mosaic tile** underscores the rustic white-glass, gray, and terra-cotta palette. Tile: Naturala! Design; pulls: Top Knots



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SUSPENSE  
LITERATURE

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## Handsome face-lift for a dated space

A Craftsman-inspired redo gave this room's old layout a whole new look  
By BILL CONROD • Photography by MEGAN CHAFFIN

The personality—even ghost—of a home's former occupants often lingers most in the master bath. A floral Colonial speaker haunted the eye in Phil and Peggy Rose's 1930s house in Wilmette, Illinois. And collections of Arts and Crafts furniture, the couple savored little by little as "a total remodel" with their home, Peggy says. Just in bad, the bath was inadequate, and the standard-height vanity was unusable. But the room's old style was

the help they called on local architect David Roberts, who had to work with the existing, feature placement. "Any plumbing changes would have meant tearing into the dining room below, which has a beamed ceiling and Arts and Crafts wallpaper," he says. After getting the look, he put in a new radiator, installed electric radiant heat under the tile floor, designed new vanities, and added a Craftsman aesthetic in the color palette, tilework, and horizontal bands of stone. Now the ghost is gone, but the Roses do have to keep around their dogs, who love the beamed floor.

Before the wallpaper and shag brown floors were a call of signs with the house. After the green granite, wood vanity, brass light, and the white-handled look given a Craftsman style.



Craftsman and influence making sense of the old and new. The only old wall hung medicine cabinet.

before+after:  
bath



before + after: bath

## the key details

**+ Strong horizontal lines:** Two bands of square iron vertical and ending create horizontal bands that are reminiscent of Craftsman interiors. The contrast with a decorative border reinforces the effect. Sink, toilet, vanity, mirror, towel rack, all in the Mendota Collection.



**+ Cast-iron radiator:** A different color (greenish) adds to the effect—and the radiator is a perfect counterpoint to the room's earthy feeling.



**pro-advice** SANDRO GREGI, ARCHITECT, EVANSTON, IL: "Bathrooms can look choppy because so many elements protrude into the space. One way to smooth that out is to add strong horizontal lines with wood trim around the room."



**+ Linen cupboard:** The best in cabinet lines: granite counter, sink, a higher than the existing sink, creating a new look for the look of the cabinet. Linen, towel rack, mirror.

**+ Linen cupboard:** The best in cabinet lines: granite counter, sink, a higher than the existing sink, creating a new look for the look of the cabinet. Linen, towel rack, mirror.



### for bath problems

See how our bathroom design team at Rockler can help you solve your bath problems.

## before + after

The location of the sink, tub, and toilet didn't change, but the 6 by 10-foot room was pulled together with fixtures, colors, and style.

**1. Put in a "line" to give the bathroom a new, unified look.**



**2. Optimized counter space on the sink is easily by stretching the granite from wall to wall and using sink deck.**

**3. Added storage by having a 2-foot tall linen cupboard to store. A 4-foot long wooden cabinet also makes use of space under the window and over the toilet.**

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## Colonial-style dining room

Classic American furniture and colorful accents create a room that's equally inviting for a Thanksgiving feast or an everyday dinner. Here's how to assemble a similar space in your home.

by MICHAEL DOUGHERTY • Photography by KIMMY DICKINSON

Formal dining areas are often reserved for entertaining and holiday celebrations. But in David and Cindy Pugh's 1813 home in Chester County, Pennsylvania, this sit-down spot serves up breakfast, lunch, and dinner—every day. So to loosen up the room's handsome Federal-style architecture without sacrificing its period feeling, Cindy dressed the space with a mix of early-American furnishings. A traditional handwoven rug and a reproduction table and chairs mix with a punched-tin candle chandelier and narrow wood screens. Green linens and patterned cushions inject cool-to-warm touches of color, and the whole room gets a glow from a warm amber-yellow wall paint. Here are some ideas for approximating the look at your home:

### mirrored screen

Tin-canite screens like this one graced Philadelphia's Carpenter's Hall, where the First Continental Congress met in 1774. \$43.50. [holbrook.com](http://holbrook.com)



### wall color

This historic painting gallery has whitewashed, eggshell-finish, lemon-juice-pink. Includes drapes. \$40 per gallon. [paul.com](http://paul.com)



### powder candlesticks

Full-shaped holders in varying heights create an elegant centerpiece for a special meal. \$38 (small) and \$59 (large). [livermore.com](http://livermore.com)

### patterned rug

A hand-woven, cotton-wool rug in a wood floor. This one's floral motif offers a traditional look. 8 by 10. \$175. [moss.com](http://moss.com)

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
SEE ARCHITECTURE PAGE 31



### punched-tin chandelier

This reproduction 18th-century fixture is a cast-iron piece that looks like an early American hand-hewn. \$275. [moss.com](http://moss.com)



### spindle-back chair

Patterned after the 18th-century Federal Windsor chair, this reproduction comes with an upholstered seat that supports your weight. \$295. [moss.com](http://moss.com)



### homework tip

CHESTER COUNTY, PA.

With pieces that are casual or rustic in style to make a formal period room feel homey and less like a museum.



### bright linens

Reddy red linens made their way into the room to add a pop of color. \$125 for a set of six. [kate-tracy.com](http://kate-tracy.com)



### turned-leg dining table

Carry top and fine mahogany down up the plank to give your table a touch of class. \$1,200. [moss.com](http://moss.com)

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## Ramp it up

This DIY dog ramp is a dream come true for pooches who have a hard time jumping into bed at night.

By KATHY HANCOCK • Photography: WENDY T. VETTER



### under-bed storage

The ramp can easily be tucked up, then folded and stored under the bed.

Whether it's walking around the block, riding shotgun on a Sunday drive, or sitting by your side watching a ball game, our dogs like to be around no matter what we're doing—even if we're just sleeping. If you share a bed with a canine companion, you might notice he sometimes has a hard time making the jump, especially if he's arthritic, older, or has health problems, such as arthritis or leg issues. That's why this portable build-it-yourself ramp is a great solution. Not only will it help your four-legged friend effortlessly climb on and off at night, it will also fold up flat so that it can easily slide right under your box spring. Better yet, the ramp opens up, revealing new storage space for dog toys, dog pillows, and pet-scented blankets. You can build a ramp of your own to put our dog *ALL* it takes is a giggle, some glue, a few bolts and washers, and stack lumber.

A woman is lying in bed, and a dog is curled up next to her.

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If you're considerate about sharing the bed with a furry companion, there may not, says animal behaviorist Dr. Nicholas K. Dodman, author of *The Well Adjusted Dog*. But there is one if Fido has behavioral problems. Dogs who groggy or too inattentive to appropriately reward their owners' gentle downright meow when badly awakened by a sudden fuss or turn, says Dodman. Sleeping in bed is also counterproductive for dogs with separation anxiety. To set barriers, you should make them sleep in a dog bed beside you, then reward further away from you so that the pet's used to sleeping solo.



**|| DOG DAYS ||**

### How much do dogs sleep?

### Do they dream?

Have you ever punched/running in place while he is sleeping? Most dogs say it's a sign that he is dreaming.

Where do they like to sleep?

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# Household wisdom: Tom Silva

This *Old House's* trusted contractor spills the beans on the biggest renovation mistake people make, the key trait to look for when hiring a contractor, and the single worst enemy of every house. *Photograph by Michelle Lerner*

With homes spanning three decades, *The Old House's* general contractor, Tom Silva, it's fair to say, has inspired an entire generation of DIYers. Tom himself was inspired to join his family business by his father. "He was a real Yankee," Tom says. "Handsome, dapper, never wanted materials, never cut corners." Like father, like son, we say! During the show's 30th season, we asked Tom to answer one of the most popular inquiries we get, and as always, his advice came heart and hog-rog.

## What can homeowners do to make working with a contractor go smoothly?

Look for a contractor whose personality is a good fit for yours. Of course, you'll want one who does good work and has worked on the type of project you're doing and all that. But you should also take and like the person you're dealing with. If you get a bad gut feeling during an interview, have somebody else. Also, be up front with what you want to accomplish. Make a detailed list, and give out your scope so that everyone's on the same page, there will be a lot less chance of miscommunication. And don't be afraid to ask questions if something doesn't look right. You don't have to be constructioned. You can just say, "Maybe I'm not understanding something here, but this doesn't look like what I asked for." A good contractor will listen and respond to your concerns.

## What's the best way to reduce the cost of a project?

Expensive materials and finishes should be the first things to go. Never skimp on the guts of your house that



Photo: Michelle Lerner

are hidden behind walls and under floors—characteristics, an efficient heating or cooling system, insulation, plumbing. Investing in these will save you money on upkeep and repairs in the long run. Some contractors will suggest cheaper options for this stuff so that you can go with cost savings in other areas, but that's probably the biggest mistake you can make. Make sure the structure and systems are solid, then use the money you save to monthly bills to upgrade decorative elements later.

## What's the worst house you've ever worked on?

We once renovated a historic house that could not be overdone. We were able to preserve the front facade and the two side walls, but everything else had to be rebuilt from scratch, which we hadn't anticipated at the outset. You always can't see problems you can't foresee when you're renovating—I've learned to expect that.

## When buying a house, what precautions should homeowners take to reduce the chance of unpleasant surprises?

Hiring an inspector is important, of course. But inspectors don't turn X-ray vision. They can't see what's underneath. Look at the house yourself from a distance. Is it crooked in leaning? Is the roofline straight? Inside, look at the walls. Are they bulging? When we get old, we sag—something happens to a house. Some settling is normal, but sagging and crooked floors could indicate that the structure is deficient, especially for an older house. Again, you won't be able to anticipate every problem you could run into, but you can look for signs of major trouble.

## What tools are essential for every homeowner?

Invest in a good hammer, screwdrivers, and drill/driver. Don't buy tools that are too big or heavy, because you won't be able to use them properly. Get a hammer that's comfortable in your grip. I've used a 16-ounce hammer with a wooden handle for years, and it has a straight draw, which can be used like a claw or wedge. When buying screwdrivers, get the best you can afford. Cheap ones can bend when you're beating down on a screw. I carry a making screwdriver because it's handy, but I always have a full-size wrench if I'm working on a project so that I don't have to reach out the top all the time. For drill/drivers, you'll get all the power you need from a 12-volt model, that's what I use. Tools they're made work like an extension, so they weigh a lot less.

## What products have become popular or been improved a lot since you started out?

Open-cell foam insulation is a great product, and what's trapping moisture that's a long time they used to. The advanced materials have been great as well—polyurethane and acrylics are easy to work with and last a long time. Fasteners and adhesives have gotten better, and they make any building tighter, stiffer, and stronger.

## What are the top three things homeowners can do to lower their heating bills this winter?

First, and up every one look you can find. You can do it over a weekend with caulking, spray foam, or weatherstripping. Next, insulate your attic. It's like an extra blanket that keeps you warm in winter. Then, if you've got an energy-audited, look into the cost of



Adding storm windows for a frame of the cost of new windows.

## What are the most important things people can do to keep their homes in good condition?

Remember: Water is the enemy! Keep it out of your house and don't let it pool around the foundation. Inspect your house's exterior a couple of times a year with a pair of binoculars. Are there shingles missing? Are you downspouts clogged or gutter clogged? You can fix many of these things over a weekend before they lead to a big problem.

You should also know where your water main shut-off valve is in case you pump spring a leak. Turn on for the electrical panel and how to switch off the main power source.

Basically it comes down to this: Take the time to figure out how your house is built and what maintenance work it's the biggest investment you'll make in your lifetime. It's worth learning how to invest it right. ■

Coming next month: Look for a special feature commemorating *The Old House's* 30 years on the air.

**tell your story**  
Share what you've learned from *The Old House's* 30th anniversary.

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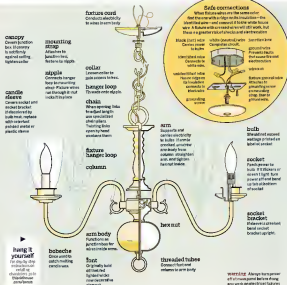
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## Shedding light on your chandelier

Repairing an old fixture or installing a new one becomes less daunting once you know how all its parts fit together. By METRODEE TECHNIQ • Illustration by DANIEL CAMPBELL





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# Reworking a ranch

Adding front and side porches and changing the roofline give a basic box a lot more appeal

By DEBORAH SMOOKIN • Photo Showroom by HOWARD CHURCH



Before



A gray roof and white trim make the house a bright yellow look like more appealing.

Shaded light gray trim, windows give the house more a traditional look.

"The outside of our house is just not pretty," declares Marco Lodi, who has lived in this life-size ranch with his parents, Eric Wink, for about a year, focusing on interior upgrades. To help them reimagine their home's plan exterior, we asked designer Richard O'Leary for some curb-appeal suggestions.

The big challenge, points out O'Leary, is the house's shabby-like shape. "Additions that modify its form will give it a lot more character," he says. Front and side porches do the trick nicely, without cluttering the house's brick shell. Matching gables on either side of the front door would make the entry more prominent and appealing, while also taking away the house's boxy look. Water front steps, a curved walkway, and low-maintenance, drought-tolerant foundation plantings would welcome visitors.

"I can't believe how much better the brick looks with these changes," says Marco. "I wish my house looked like this right now!" ■

## Finishing touches

A porch makes any house feel like home. No-flush materials and shutters bring the house closer.



paint

Red door adds warmth and is a focal point. A. Chances and their porch against light yellow brick and white trim. Finishing Paints, \$25 per gallon



star pendant

Seen in profile on a side porch, this Moroccan star-shaped pendant adds a touch of whimsy. Mugs, \$15 per piece



composite decking

Reeds (wood boards) stand up to outdoor use and cost. Trex, \$2.80 per foot



porch swing

Over smaller porches, there's enough space for this American-style free-swing. Porch Swings, \$350

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home center  
project

## Turn kitchen cabinets into a sideboard

This elegant storage piece came together with stock base cabinets and maddening by MONTEY STRAUSS • Photograph by WENDY T. WILSON

**Costs** \$400  
**Time** 8 hours  
**Difficulty** Moderate  
Attaching the base cabinets is simple, but cutting the panels and securing the maddening takes practice.



Dispersed, as in a piece, table, or a sideboard, you'll have a whole lot of storage space in a relatively small footprint, making it handy addition to any household. A sturdy, high-quality one can serve as a beautiful display in your living room, but as the Q&A below generalizes. This idea, however, you can enhance a low stock kitchen base cabinet with wood, maddening, and a little bit of paint to produce a beautiful piece for a fraction of the cost of buying one ready-made. On the surface, it's a 15- to 20-inch cabinet fixed with doors and open shelves, and it's a little more than a little bit of paint and a little bit of glue to put all the pieces together. Your bathroom remodel will have made it the perfect partner for years to come.

For more ideas, visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com), or visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com) for more ideas. Visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com) for more ideas. Visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com) for more ideas.

#### HOW IT'S DONE

## Build a sidebar

Turned feet and moldings will lend your finished piece some decorative flair. You'll find all the materials you need at any large home center.



get complete instructions

Future studies need to be designed to assess the impact of the proposed changes on the overall health of the population.

- 2. Trim the facekick.** To shorten each cabinet to accommodate the feet, transfer a line that's flush with the bottom edge of the face frame to the facekick, sides and back of each cabinet. Remove the excess material using a handplane.



- 5. Add the feet and knobs:** Screw-foot plates through the bottom of the cabinet corners. Thread one foot onto each plate. Drill two holes for the knobs in each drawer; secure knobs through the holes.

- 2. Fasten the cabinets together:**  
Sandwich two furring strips between the cabinets vertically to act as spacers. Fasten the cabinets together along the length of the strips using deck screws, one in five each side for strength.



- 6. Mount the door latches.** Inside each cabinet, toward the top, nail-embed against the back of the face frame where the push-latch will go. Screw the latch into place so that it's flush with the front of the frame, then secure the corresponding magnetic strike to the inside of the door.



- 3. Cover the ends.** Nail two 1x3 furring strips vertically to the unfinished ends of the joined cabinets. Using an air bracer, use two pieces to size from a sheet of furniture-grade plywood, then use finish nails to secure them to the strips.



4. **Close the front.** Get a 1x4, let it sit into a lipch longer than the width of the joined cabinets. Attach it on edge below the drawers using finish nails. To cover up the spacers and exposed plywood edges, attach vertical 1/2x2 stile cut to size, above and below the molding.

- 8. Trim the top.** After bed molding, sanded at the corners, to the front and sides of the top using finish sds. Fill seams and fastener holes with wood putty; sand smooth. Apply paint or stain, then highlight details with metallic wax finish.

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# This Old House & Home

*easy ways to  
update your decor*

see how feminine colors  
and soft textures warm up  
sleek furniture

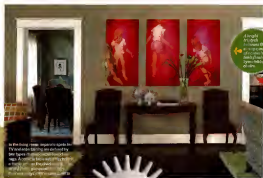
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*steal this style!*

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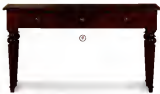
A large, vibrant red abstract painting is the centerpiece of the room. It's a bold choice that adds a pop of color to the neutral tones of the walls and furniture.

2

In the living room, separate-seats for TV watching sitting are defined by the large, dark wood console table. A central table with a glass top is used for dining. The room is decorated with a large, vibrant red abstract painting and a large, vibrant red abstract painting.



"I wanted a soft, contemporary look—not country chic, which can be fussy, and not super modern, which can be cold."



2



"It's fun to give a formal room an unexpected twist, like painting the walls with a blown-out pattern—it says it's okay to relax."

A large, vibrant red abstract painting is the centerpiece of the room. It's a bold choice that adds a pop of color to the neutral tones of the walls and furniture.



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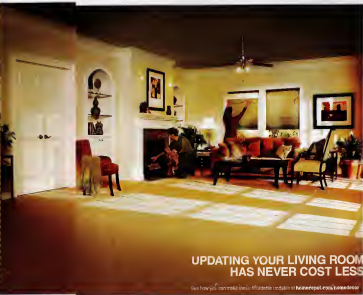
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PHOTO: J. J. Housen

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A woman in a green shirt and white pants stands in a kitchen with teal walls and dark wood cabinets. She is cutting vegetables on a countertop. A dog is visible in the foreground. The kitchen features a large window, a sink, and various kitchen items like a mixer and bowls.

*"Colorful walls and bright accents warm up cold granite and stainless steel, turning a functional kitchen into an inviting gathering spot."*



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## ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORT INDEX

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Home



Canoeal portraits, a gold-toned carpet, and patterned lamp shades merge by the dark furniture. Decorative painting by Brian Carter.

**T**ight when it came to saving space, being smart religious in the furniture's design investment.

**Left:** Fluorescence image of a single neuron. **Right:** Fluorescence image of a single neuron. **Left:** Fluorescence image of a single neuron. **Right:** Fluorescence image of a single neuron.

# Home

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# REFRESH YOUR ROOMS WITH COLOR

NEW PAINT IS THE EASIEST—AND THRIFTIEST—MAKEOVER AROUND. IN THESE EIGHT PAGES, FIND INSPIRING IDEAS FOR TRANSFORMING YOUR HOME WITH BUCKET, BRUSH AND ROLLER.

BY JILL CONNORS • PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCANLON

A FRESH PAINT JOB ENLIVENSA HO-HUM INTERIOR, so question, last picking the right color (or combinations of colors) and figuring out where best to put it and how much to use can prove perplexing.

Here's where expert strategies can help. To narrow your choices, for instance, breakfast a color wheel. Paint pros use the tool to see how colors will look together before they roll it home. (Think us up to use wheel at [thecolorhouse.com/homes](http://thecolorhouse.com/homes).) How do you see to see color on the wheel, such as yellow and green, make pleasing pairs, and shades of complementary colors, which are found on opposite sides of the wheel.

To judge where and how much, try the 60-30-10 rule. "Basically you use a dominant color for 60 percent of the room, a recessive one for 30, and an accent for 10," says color expert Debbie Ziemer of the Paint Quality Institute. For whole-house schemes, Ziemer suggests using the same three colors but varying which ones play the starring and supporting roles.

If you're thinking outside the box, consider adding a single dose of a color you love to just one element in a room, such as the details of a built-in bookcase. "Painting one surface or an interesting architectural detail is such a great way to get some bold punch," says Ann McGhee, a color consultant for Valparaiso and founder of Beehive Studios.

Take a step to see more paint tape just to work in it's colorful spaces. Then steal a few to stylishly and inexpensively update any tired rooms in your house.

**Try muted opposites** Pairing shades of an entry hall and adjacent room in soft shades of champagne, minty red and green—opposites on the color wheel—has a soothing effect. Paired with a honey-hued wood floor, the look refreshes the green with a muted earth tones.

**UNIFY YOUR LIVING SPACES** WALL COLORS THAT RELATE TO EACH OTHER DRAW THE EYE FROM ONE AREA TO THE NEXT, CREATING A HARMONIOUS FLOW.



Page 04  
10-11  
Living Room

Page 05  
12-13  
Living Room

**Use white to bring out the best in your color choices** Pairing trim white with colors that aren't too dark or too light can make a room look bright and airy. Here, a crisp white adds to the room's warm yellow walls and the foyer's cool green.

Page 06  
14-15  
Living Room

Page 07  
16-17  
Living Room



## CREATE AN ACCENT WALL

A SINGLE FIELD OF COLOR CAN SET OFF A ROOM'S BEST ASSETS—BOTH THE BUILT-IN DETAILS AND THE ARTWORK (AND FURNISHINGS YOU INTRODUCE).



**Use color to highlight architecture.** Painting the exterior wall off-white all white shades windows and draws attention to its peaked ceiling as well as the outside view glimpsed through the French doors and windows. Here, a vibrant color choice is ideal because of the abundance of natural light, where something more subdued would appear washed out.



**Set a stage with paint.** A deep color becomes the backdrop for whatever is in front of it. "I kept thinking, 'Should we do the accent wall?' and the K&Ss had a collection of framed photos while providing a warm and embracing feel to the room's pale neutral furnishings."



**Define an area in an open plan.** A colored wall can delineate space for a specific activity. Here, grayish green behind the dining table helps carve out a distinct eating area within a whitewashed kitchen.

## PLAY UP CEILINGS

WHILE WHITE ON HIGH MAY MAKE ROOMS FEEL AIRIER, COLOR CAN ADD COMFORT AND PERSONALITY WHERE IT'S LEAST EXPECTED.



**Maximize a lofty look.** Adding color to the upper trim of a coffered ceiling amplifies the feeling of height. Here, a golden-yellow adds depth with a full wash of—painted white to match the ceiling—draws the eye upward. A burst of silvery gray on the surface of the ceiling's crown adds a warm gold.



**Warm up walls of windows.** Painting the top and grooves of a bright red lower wall usually, making the glass-walled room feel cooler. And using red, white, and black leather chairs on the floor of ground level.



## BE BOLD IN THE KITCHEN

AN ACTIVITY-ORIENTED GATHERING SPACE, THE KITCHEN IS IDEAL FOR ENERGETIC COLOR. A DEPARTURE FROM TRADITIONAL WHITE



**Go for shades of equal intensity** Mixing saturated colors, such as the daffodil and onyx here, balances the space. The green and the yellow and the green, green on the brackets, creates a dynamic yet balanced look. Saturated hues are often found in the lower portions of paint chips, with lighter tints—such as this lovely blue—at the top.

**Daffodil Yellow**

**Onyx Green**

**Light Green**

**Dark Green**

**Strong Focus**  
Yellow

**New Color**  
Yellow

**Old Color**  
Yellow

**Red Green**  
Yellow

Put the focus on a dominant color by surrounding it with neutrals. Single walls and a covered island floor bring out the white-yellow splashes in the cabinetry. A subtle, dark green paint, dark wooden stools and a wooden island top complement the white walls and the new, more modern kitchen island.

Use the 60-30-10 rule to balance multiple colors. Gray-green paint on the island provides a unifying 60 percent base color in the kitchen. Blue, which accounts for 30 percent, highlights the room's center island. Red paint on the dining table and yellow on the island doors, window treatments and cherry accents fill the last 10 percent.

**Strong Green**  
Yellow



## BRIGHTEN BUILT-INS

A HIT OF COLOR CAN TURN THE FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS IN A ROOM INTO EYE-CATCHING FOCAL POINTS



**Green up your built-in cabinet**

**Spotlight a collection.** A minty hue inside this cabinet subordinated the green paint on the dining chairs and highlights the array of dishes and decorative objects displayed on the shelves. Crisp white paint on the outside, surrounded by natural pine outsidings, gives the built-in a fresh, cottage-style look.



**Shelf system out of this world**

**Embrace an open feeling.** Painting the back panel of this shelving unit the same sunny yellow that is used on the surrounding walls gives this built-in a light, airy look to balance the rest of the attached wardrobe.

## PUNCH UP TRIM AND PANELS

ONE COLOR FOR ALL YOUR WOODWORK PROVIDES A CONSISTENT, GROUNDED LOOK, WHETHER IN ONE ROOM OR THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE



**Reverse the conventional scheme.** Instead of the typical arrangement of white trim set against a colored wall, a plummy pumpkin-colored paint—selected to match the laminate countertop—highlights brown molding, open shelving, and floor casing. As a result, the white base cabinetry seems to recede into the white wall.

**Painted in a plummy shade**



**Painted in a plummy shade**

**Wrap a room in color for an elegant, neo-victorian look.** Using the same paint for wall paneling, doors, and moldings, such as the fiery terracotta glaze used here, adds drama to a room, says Debbie Bremer. Choose a deep shade to make a large space seem snug, as in this den. For smaller expanses, feel free with a light color. ■

**Link spaces with attention-grabbing trim paint.** Brushing the living room's around-the-pier foyer's woodwork with the same blue paint, as was a seamless transition between the two rooms. The sofa's shade has the advantage of right-angled shadow lines in the trim and moldings. White paint has a reflective quality that tends to blind details.

**Tricky blue**

**get painting help**  
Find step-by-step how-to guides on your walls and woodwork at [thisoldhouse.com/denver](http://thisoldhouse.com/denver)

# Nothing could have prepared us for this

The projects—from repairing rotten floor joists and leaking radiators to stemming the tide of a full-blown flood—just kept coming for a couple of first-timers tackling a deteriorating 1908 cottage

By Elva Van Dersand, homeowner  
Photographs by Susan Seibert  
Styling by Michela Greco

As I drove up to my house I began to worry. Through the windows I could see strange things around inside. My anxiety level spiked as my husband, Ty, opened the car door and sat down next to me. "Elva, honey, there's something I have to tell you," he said nervously. "They flooded the house."

"They" were the otherwise sensible HVAC repair guys who had suggested to close our radiator. Word spread, filling our 1908 home with Elva's water. The strangers were the cleaning crew that had been called in with wet-dry vacs and industrial Mopsters to dry out our quarter-acre oak floors before they started to warp. In some ways I was lucky to come

home when I did. Ty had walked in to find a lake flowing in our kitchen. Looking back, I'm amazed that we managed to hark together so much. It was December 2006, and we had already been through two years of remodeling madness. What kept us going was our faith that the house was worth it—and that we were the right people to restore it.

You see, when Ty and I first moved to Allsday, Oregon, from our native area, we were disappointed to learn that anything built out here before the 1970s is considered old. It made the search for our first home pretty frustrating—until we came across this house, which blends Victorian and Colonial-style features. Some

**THIS PAGE:** Homeowners Ty and Elva Van Dersand enjoy their remodel kitchen. The dark windows appear colorless (LEFT) were replaced with a bank of white light, reflecting more light into salvaged wood glass



Elva and Ty Van Dersand enjoy their remodel kitchen. The dark windows appear colorless (LEFT) were replaced with a bank of white light, reflecting more light into salvaged wood glass



Oregian's husband had a penchant for combining styles even then. The gorgeous dining room and the stately yet deceptively simple kitchen may alone make me fall in love with this place when we saw it in 2003.

The good—and bad—news that little had been done to the house's interior. The plaster walls and many of the very glass windows had cracked, the plumbing was leaking again, and there was no insulation. To best use of the space's backbone, a cast radiator had been rigged up in place of an antique Victorian stove. But the house had good bones and a lot of original woodwork, glass, and other details worth saving. We knew now we could tackle the project.

The age 7½'s eldest and I'm a place-missy student, we both grew up among avid renovators. He helped his parents fix up their house, and I spent a lot of time in landfills and hardware stores as a volunteer, trying along a few my busy mom, who ran into home improvement long before it became a national pastime. She relied on her drill and saw—and a blowtorch—to do most everything.

In an attempt to guarantee success, we took a scientific approach to our mission: not just demolish out everything, from the around budget to a step-by-step plan of attack. From the start, the basement became a storage space for clearance-sale appliances and light fixtures that we wanted

TO BE PAGE: The dining room is a recessed-panel window that had to be replaced after the radiator heated flooded the room. OPPOSITE TOP: To save money, the homeowners reused the lower kitchen cabinets. Below: the owner's (left) and sister's (right) style ideas to match the new upper cabinets. BOTTOM LEFT: Removing the ancient work porch and a cast-iron railing (right) revealed the original hardwood floors and a cast-iron radiator. The owner's (left) and sister's (right) style ideas to match the new upper cabinets. BOTTOM RIGHT: The owner's (left) and sister's (right) style ideas to match the new upper cabinets.

to use in the future. We knew we'd eventually get the kitchen, so we renovated the pantry first to have a sink and some cabinet space when that time came. We added the 1960s patch floor, too, since the shared foundation for the two spaces was sinking and needed to be reinforced. For weeks we pulled down wood paneling, added insulation, and put in new plumbing, delighting in uncovering original details such as the hardwood ceiling. We also looked for places to add doors. Why? The Old House magazine step-by-step in hand, we installed new crown molding in the pantry.

In our second year we replaced some of the outdated system. The blown-in attic insulation had been crushed when previous owners replaced the roof, making it pretty useless. To put it new fiberglass, Tyr and I had to sweep out the old stuff with a vacuum and vacuum, filling over 40 huge trash bags. Sadly, there was no roof trussing bridle up in the attic, but there was a fine surprise in the walls when we replaced the knob-and-tube electrical: bare live wires. Poor Tyr had to deal with those.

We were doing most of the work ourselves to save money and make sure that quality work was going into our home. There isn't a contractor we know of—except TIGHTY's Tim Seiva—who we still find our missing here every day was even and that the cabinet was perfectly square the way we did. If we didn't know how to fix something, we paid someone to come in for an hour or two to show us how to do it. That's how we learned to connect wires and hook up radiators.

Even though restoring the home's historic radiators has been one of our biggest headaches, we love the heat they put out. We had to replace two that were broken and install new ones. Since they're a northern heating method of choice in this area, we drove all around Oregon's salvage yards to find replacements and bought the 100-pound cast-iron monster back home, you'd be amazed at what can fit in a little frame. Finding a contractor who didn't run away at the sight of them was even harder, which is why freely do up the radiator (HOLY!) folks who accidentally flooded us home. We had to live with noisy blowers for a month to ensure that radiators didn't take hold, but the



**"When we didn't know how to fix something, we paid someone to come in for an hour or two to show us how to do it."**

## What they did

Invested in a series of long-term  
improvements to the house.

**Retraining owl:** \$30,500

**Time frame:** Six years and counting.

**Where we lived:** Taking advantage  
of different fields and sales to buy  
appliances and other items.

**Where we shopped:** Pottery-style  
light fixtures and paint brushes  
available for the house.

**What we'd do differently:** Run  
SPAC ducting for air conditioning  
while the walls were open.

**Biggest challenge:** Finding  
historically appropriate materials  
to best fit the property's history.

**How we did it:** Working with  
local vendors across the state.

After plans for the original  
project mostly failed, the homeowners  
revisited plumbing in the upstairs  
bath to get a better feel of space.



**BEFORE:** Bathroom showing exposed layers of tilework and other wood, white shag-  
tile light fixtures and marble-topped vanity with basket of laundry in the space.

company took care of the \$15,000 repair bill, and, almost more important, they  
finally gave us a reliable heating system. Remember, it was already our second  
December living in the house.

Three years in we finally began working on the kitchen. While we were at it,  
we decided to replace the plumbing and electrical since the room's ceiling had  
to come down to access everything. This, of course, prompted the upstairs  
bathroom remodel. I don't think I'll say "while we're at it" ever again.

The next two years were filled with various small projects of tile, hardwood,  
and custom molding. The started making that he went to work to relax because all  
our weekends and days off were spent on home improvement projects.

On the second floor, we upgraded the bed's powder-blue vanity with a more  
period-appropriate marble-topped one. I used refinishing the wood that was  
underneath several layers of vinyl flooring. But 50 hours of hot, sweaty work  
and several hundred dollars later, I discovered the old floor couldn't be saved.  
There was so much water damage from the leaky can-can pipes and toilet that  
we ended up having to redo the floor and reinforce some of the supporting joists.  
Thankfully, we found some salvaged fir flooring to replace the original.

Eventually, I finally got the kitchen at my dream—complete with new  
stainless-steel appliances and honed granite counters. The end! I spent hours  
stripping wood and using dental tools to pick out paint from the original hard-  
board, doing and window trim, but it's worth seeing the refinished wood gleam  
against the new white Shaker-style cabinets.

One day we'll like to turn the basement into a wine cellar and exercise room.  
For now, though, we're taking a little break to appreciate from the past six  
years—or trying to, at least. You know what they say: You've never done with  
project until you move. And Tye and I plan on this fun home being our last. ■

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save money. Please visit our website at [www.cheapdiy.com](http://www.cheapdiy.com) and a free description of the work  
you'll be doing is waiting for you.

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**Read more** and sign up for \$250 in savings on your home at [www.cheapdiy.com](http://www.cheapdiy.com).



**THIS PAGE, ABOVE:**  
A sink and laundry  
room (BEFORE) became  
a bright, functional laundry  
and entry with a new  
hardwood side table  
grille counter (a moment  
saved for a later price).  
**LEFT:** The homeowners  
designed and installed  
the brick-and-white  
painted patterned ceramic  
tiles themselves.

**online DIY**  
Get step-by-step instructions on  
how to fix it. It's that easy.  
on the house.





With circular design, you can patch in missing pieces and as needed, incorporate a new piece when you find one. The design is made of a series of concentric circles, with the outermost circle being the largest. The design is made of a series of concentric circles, with the outermost circle being the largest. The design is made of a series of concentric circles, with the outermost circle being the largest.

## Framed medallion

When two types of flooring meet, a paired pattern can ease the transition. Here, an existing oak floor abuts an addition's heavy-pine floor where boards run perpendicular to the oak. An open, circular, squared-off medallion is bordered by paired borders and solid circles at the corner and in all four centers, where the oak's angles and where the curve of the arched passageway. In a larger rectangular space, a row of circles or smaller dovetailed designs would work equally well.

### HOW IT'S DONE

1. Rough up the floor with 100-grit sandpaper. Measure the area to cover and draw a pattern to scale on paper, adjusting proportions to make a dovetail in a square. The 10-foot square shown fits neatly in a 9-by-6-foot border. The center dot, 2 feet across, is framed by open "leaves" of similar size. Solid 30-inch circles ground the design in the four corners.
2. Mark and tape the inside and outside borderlines. Then make a compass with a small nail, a string, and a pencil. Tap the nail into the center point and draw the diameter of the largest circle so that it touches the paired border. Then draw the inside border of that circle, 1/4 inch smaller. Draw the 2-foot-diameter center circle and the smaller corner circles.
3. Divide up the remaining space to determine the size of the four open leaves, which will have 21½-inch-wide outlines that touch the largest circle and merge into one line where two meet (see below). Using the string compass, draw the outside lines of each leaf, then the inside line. Use a small paintbrush and oil paint to fill in the borders and center circle.
4. Fill in the outlines of the largest circle and the four leaves. Keep a rag and solvent handy to fix any slip-ups that may occur as you go. Work your way out from the center to the four circles and the thick border. Allow the paint to dry overnight, and finish with a coat of satin polyurethane. Let dry for three hours, then apply a second coat.



**pro advice** BIANCA CARTER  
DECORATIVE PAINTER

"Don't obsess about perfection—no one is going to get down on the floor and look that closely. Dile for any small scratches and chips later on. They give it patina, a lived-in look."

**Costs \$60**

**Time:** Two days  
**Difficulty:** Moderate  
Just do it! If you're not sure, follow a video.





#### Diamonds and gold

Dots of color bring out the new lines of the lattice, and they make the space latticework pop. Photo: Benjamin Moore's Rock Imprints and Designer's Cream; wallpaper border: eBay.com in satin fabric

## Latticework runner

When a corridor has other items on there, a floor pattern can give it a style boost and an identity. This hallway radiates with half-painted diamonds, natural light pouring through French doors, a floor lamp, and a chair. It just needed one more thing to feel like a proper space: a custom runner to set it off.

### HOW IT'S DONE

1. Calculate the size of the runner, allowing for radiators and heat registers, and pinpoint the center. Determine the size of the whole and half diamonds for a consistent pattern, basing the runner's width and length as needed. This design is 2 by 8 feet with 12-inch squares. Use ISO grid to rough up the surface. With a pencil and ruler, draw the pattern on the floor.

2. Using a school compass and a pencil, draw 2 1/4-inch circles around every other intersecting point that is not along the edges of the design; these will be solid black. At the remaining intersections, draw 3 1/4-inch circles; these 4-inch circles (measured there) these will be solid yellow with 1/4-inch black borders.

3. Tape off the inside and outside of the runner's borders, and the inside and outside of the latticework lines, leaving a 1/4-inch space for these. Trim the tape on a diagonal when it reaches a circle—anchoring it with putty knife and taping with a quick upward motion is a fast way to make it clean cut. Use a small paintbrush to fill in the yellow circles.

4. Let the yellow circles dry, then start filling in the black border the latticework lines, and the solid black circles, working from one end of the runner to the other and using a flat 1/4-inch artist's brush. Fill in the black area of the yellow circles as you go. Allow the paint to dry, then coat the entire runner with satin polyurethane. Let dry, and apply a second coat. ■



DIY



DIY

Cost: \$50

Time: Two days

Difficulty: Moderate

The pencil gets close, quality sealer the lines are tape-off

# ALL ABOUT

## Interior paint

The experts at This Old House help you navigate the paint aisle like a pro so that you can choose the perfect finish for your rooms. By Sel Vuglics

Interior paint has come a long way in the 32,000 years since we started slapping it up against the sides of cave walls. That primitive mix of crushed ochre, clay, and animal excreta has evolved into a sophisticated cocktail of pigments and resins able to resist scrubbing, stains, and mold. Today, paint exists among the most DIY-friendly and do-it-yourself home improvement materials, easy to brush or roll out and quick to transform the look and feel of a room with just a couple of gallons.

Paint companies continue to update their formulas, making them "greener" by dropping out chemicals that are unhealthy for our families and the environment, boosting additives for more vivid hues, and adding high-tech ingredients to provide greater durability. The problem is, paint sales are now crowded with so many choices that it's hard to decide what to buy. And unless you know what you need and where to find it, each can looks pretty much the same.

This Old House is here to help. On the following pages, we decode the differences between high- and low-VOC paints, help you pick the right sheen for your job, and explain what a VOC is and why you should care. We'll also show you the latest in special-effect finishes (think gold-dusted walls) and the tools to apply them, and, most important, we'll give you the know-how to get the best results the next time you decide to paint the inside of your cave.

### What's in paint?

The amounts of the various ingredients that they all share from ingredients

**additives**  
Performance  
boosters such as  
antiblocking  
agents and  
moldicides

**binders**  
Resins that  
tie the paint  
into a solid  
film on the wall



**pigments**  
Provide  
color and  
opacity to the  
paint

**solvents**  
Solvents that  
keep paint  
liquid until it  
is applied to the  
surface

**extenders**  
Lapels that  
thicken the  
paint



### VITALS

#### How much to buy?

One gallon covers about 400 square feet. To calculate how many to buy, divide the square footage of your walls and ceiling (minus doors and windows) by 400.

#### DIY or hire a pro?

If you have the time and energy to do the work, painting accounts for about 20 percent of the work to do. Putting roller on the walls is easy.

#### How does it hold up?

With the right prep, quality paint should last 10 to 15 years. Some companies offer lifetime warranties on their products.



#### What are VOCs?

Volatile organic compounds—found mostly in the solvents that keep paint liquid.

Specific chemicals that off-gas from the paint over time. Short-term exposure can cause headaches and eye irritation. Long-term exposure can lead to more serious health problems. Look for low or zero VOC.

## What makes one paint better than another?

It depends on the amount and quality of the resins, pigments, and additives inside the can. Here's how three grades of acrylous paint from one maker stack up.



good

### CLASSIC 99

SHERWIN WILLIAMS

Resin: Vinyl acrylic

Pigment (by weight): 32% titanium dioxide

3% aluminum carbonate

Additives: Detonators for easier bubble-free finish

What to expect: Stains should come off if you clean up within the hour. Susceptible to blemishes if installed and

Price: \$16 per gallon

## COMPARE PIGMENTS

Check the paint company's material safety data sheets online to see how much titanium dioxide it adds to each can. The higher the percentage of this pigment, the better the cover (up to 30% is best). Cheaper pigments, such as calcium carbonate, are less effective.



better

### SUPERPAINT

SHERWIN WILLIAMS

Resin: Vinyl acrylic

Pigment (by weight): 33% titanium dioxide

3% calcium carbonate

Additives: Waxing agents to reduce

leakage

What to expect: More resistant to stain and

scrubbing than previous colors better

Price: \$17 per gallon

best

### DURATION HOME

SHERWIN WILLIAMS

Resin: Styrene acrylic

Pigment (by weight): 33% titanium dioxide

Additives: Microsilica helps prevent mold growth

What to expect: Needs no primer because of high level of titanium dioxide. Styrene-based acrylics make it

more durable and washable. Some companies use 30% acrylic resin in their top-of-the-line paints

Price: \$18 per gallon

## Where to use which paint

Choose based on what's important in the room: whether it be making things in the walls, highlighting long rain stains, or easy cleaning in a bathroom. How a paint will perform is all with its sheen or gloss. Flatter, low-luster paints contain minerals that

roughen the surface, creating an uneven coat that hides flaws. Glossier paints have fewer minerals and form a smoother, more durable finish, but they show imperfections.

### Sheen-o-meter

Sheen-o-meter

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### 1. Trim: GLOSS

This shiny paint is used on trim and built-ins. It can take a beating that would ruin flat paint. Oil-based gloss has a harder, more scrubable finish than any water-based latex.

### 2. Walls: SEMI-GLOSS

The traditional choice for wall areas, the shiny surface is easy to clean. Choose one with mildewcide.

### 3. Floors: GLOSS/HELL

The most popular sheen for walls, it's washable without being too shiny. Great for high-traffic areas and finger prints on the wall.

### 4. Bedrooms: SATIN/MATTE

These finishes resist fading, the shiny spots that happen if a surface is repeatedly rubbed or scrubbed. It's less glossy, goes off a warm glow.

### 5. Ceiling: FLAT

This paint hides imperfections and has an even tone that doesn't attract attention. The hard-to-clean finish is perfect for ceilings, which aren't prone to stains. Paints sold specifically for ceilings are made to reflect light and hide any shiny spots.

Maximize Form White  
1500 Sq. Ft. (1000 Sq. Ft. per gallon)



## Does green mean family-safe?

**Yes, it does.** Green paints are safer because their makers have reduced or eliminated the toxic VOCs that can irritate the skin and breathe. And they've done it without compromising quality or jacking up prices. Green paints are in good as far as the old school variety and most of the same as a mid-range or premium latex. The problem, some green paints are more people, and eco-friendly than others. Here are the key questions to ask when shopping for green paint.

**What's the VOC level?** A zero-VOC paint is generally the best. "Low VOC" if it has less than 120 grams of VOCs per liter for flat sheens and 140 grams for satin. Check that most standards set by Green Seal, an independent leader and certifier of paints, have even less—no more than 80 grams per liter for flat finishes and 100 grams for nonflat. A "zero-VOC" paint can't have more than 5 grams per liter, according to Environmental Protection Agency standards.

**Does it contain other harmful ingredients?** Your best assurance that a paint is formulated without nasties is a logo from independent leaders Green Seal, Green Guard, or Scientific Certification Systems. They test more than 3,000 unsafe compounds, including VOCs such as benzene, formaldehyde, and lead. And plasticizers like phthalates. Green White, another leader, bans 26 such chemicals. Can't find logos on products of the paint store? Visit [greenwatch.org](http://greenwatch.org), [greenwatch.org](http://greenwatch.org), or [greenwatch.org](http://greenwatch.org) for approved paints.

**Do the colorants have VOCs?** You may think you're home safe with a low-VOC paint, but once it's mixed with the universal colorants used in most paint stores, it could be anything but. On average, these colorants add about 250 grams of VOCs to a gallon, darker shades have more. To get around this, either settle for colors that are factory mixed or look for pigments with no VOCs (like pigments, such as Mylar, Freshcare Colors, or Yale Colorhouse).

**Did you know?** Regular latex paint off-gasses formaldehyde and other VOCs for up to three years—the time it takes to fully cure after it's rolled onto your walls.



## What's up with that \$100 can of paint?

The chief difference between a \$55 premium paint and a super-premium one is that costs twice as much is the type and amount of pigments. These finely ground minerals comprise up to 70 percent of the paint's weight, compared with about 30 percent for an ordinary premium brand. Lift a can from Fine Paints of Europe or Farrow & Ball and you can feel the extra heft of the pigments. The payoff: richer vivid colors, fewer coats, and longer-wearing finish.

## Project planner

With the right tools, a little advance work, and a solid game plan, you can paint like a pro.

### 1 Get your gear FOR GREAT RESULTS, ROUND UP THESE ESSENTIALS

- If you'll prep lightweight speckling and putty knives to fill dents, paintable latex caulk and gun to hide joints. 100-grit sandpaper and sanding pole to smooth surfaces.
- For application: 9-inch nylon-polyester brush to cut in around trim; roller frame extension pole; roller covers with a 1/2-inch-to-1/4-inch nap for walls and ceilings; brush bucket and roller tray; and sturdy bleached-lumber step.
- For protection: drop cloth to cover floor and furniture; painter's tape.
- For cleanup: paint comb to deep-clean brush bristles; reusable plastic bags to store wet rollers.



**no-bleed tape**  
Gels green tape, rather than your blue slanting to show paint bleed-through. See [mptape.com](http://mptape.com).



**USEFUL STUFF FOR UNDER \$10**  
USE EMONCE AND YOU'LL WONDER HOW YOU EVER GOT ALONG WITHOUT 'EM

**9-in-1 tool**  
Gangster pulled off roller covers and old walls out of joints. Doubles as scrubby with \$5. [hobbybrook.com](http://hobbybrook.com)



**point-can key**  
Shave your non-scraper in a second, open box with the best deal you can get for the task. The key won't bend the old roller, so the corners won't be. \$5, hardware stores.



**3 Paint in sequence TO SAVE TIME AND EFFORT. STICK TO THIS PLAN**  
• Paint from first to last so you don't have to worry the little enamel's into your walls.  
• Tackle the ceiling next. Brush a 3-inch-wide band around its perimeter. Then paint the rest of the ceiling with a roller. When the ceiling is dry, mask off its perimeter and try to try with painter's tape.  
• Do walls last. Cut in around the perimeter of each wall with your brush. Finish by rolling paint on walls with a 1/2" W shape to avoid any drippy leaks.

**online painting help**  
Get more tips on painting walls, or get advice on how to choose the right paint for your project. Visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com).



## Can you go faux?

Decorative-painting adds depth, texture, and a liveliness to walls, yet even the most daring to make effects—flamed walls, distressed walls—can be easily achieved without any fancy tools or know-how. Just choose a roller frame with one of these specialty covers for a professional-looking finish; you can do yourself saving paint and a combination of paint and glaze.

**J Fluffy roller:** Soft scraps of chenille sewed to a fuzzy roller provide a fast, easy way to mimic the look of worn leather. \$20

2. **Regretless:** For a washed-silk effect (shown above).

above) use this instead of crumpling up a plastic bag and randomly blotting the wall. \$7

**3 Rag rollers:** Get the look of crushed velvet or parchment paper, effects typically achieved by dabbing the wall with cotton cloths. **\$7**  
All-Trim Work Tools  
internationalinc.  
whisperrollers.com



### What is a glaze?

A translucent resin-rich liquid that you apply over colored wall paper to ease and change, rather than add shade. Glazes can also be used with marble and stone to resemble textured fabrics or plaster. Because they dry slowly, you can blend and rework glaze patterns until you're happy with the results. So take your time and have some fun.

## Dramatic paint effects made easy

Get the look of a weathered color wash or pefinized plaster straight from the can, or pair traditional paint with a glaze for walls with texture or shine.



## + diametric

Layer with stripes of clear  
glaze over. Bake at 350° for  
a glossy three-dimensional  
effect. Peas, Glaze, 500,  
bake.com

- linear

Drugs don't erode trust  
virtually through a novel  
glass applied over the  
point. The medicine mimics  
the look of a live fabric.  
Signature Color's Tintable  
Glass, \$2.5 per sq ft  
www.sigcolor.com



## † crackle

Shed the special glass over a hot point of fire, then cut the glass with a flint to different colors. The glass makes the hot metal split and crack, revealing the true metal beneath. *Wardens of our Faith: Crucible Medium, \$25 per quart, wherever wine is sold.*

#### 4. Discussion

Apply United Mine Workers' dues over 200¢ in copper-colored eggshell for the look of metal. Studio Finish. Latex Metallic Gloss. \$26 per quart. [benjaminmoss.com](http://benjaminmoss.com)



→ played

Treated on bareboards with a flat, industrial-style paint with a gritty finish, creating sweeping architectural appeal. The resulting look resembles rustic, aged plaster.

BurnerQing in Orem, Utah, \$50 per gallon, [burnerq.com](http://burnerq.com)



frank like a pet

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inside

SELECT STUDS

MAKE FLOORS SHINE

WARM UP A BASEMENT

MORE



76  
tips, tricks, and  
answers to  
your home-  
improvement  
questions



**Q** I've never used this piece in my Dremel tool set before. What does it do?

—TIMOTHY D. CALDWELL  
BOSTON, MA



**A** Dremel makes 185 specialized accessories to fit its line of high-speed rotary tools. Not all tools serve long, but you'll want to know about what each one does. The cone-shaped piece you're asking about is a grinding stone for enlarging holes. It's made of a coarse material of aluminum oxide, a good choice for enlarging holes in wood. —THE EDITORS





→ Our card of witness expertise



When I look for 2x4s and 2x6s at the home center it's hard to find ones that are straight. How do I choose decent lumber?

—Pawel HATCHEK, CO-FOUNDER, INC.



**Team Silver replies:** If you want every piece of lumber to be perfect, give up! It's not going to happen. Instead, look for lumber that's suited for post projects despite its defects. You end up saving a lot of time and money.

When you get to a lumber pile, size up the board in two steps. First, identify the defects in the wood—the knots and cracks and such. Then try to measure the end of a 12-foot board; you'll be a pro if you can find an 11-foot piece. That's why when I'm working on small projects I take a cut list and tape measure to the lumber yard so that I'll know exactly what I need from each board.

**Another example.** When I need studs and plate stock for a new wall, the first thing I check for is warped and twisting. Studs that are warped along the edge will make the drywall bulge outward or inward; I put them aside to be put into other projects, such as the cupboard or garage doors and windows. A stud that's badly warped along its edge but bowed along its wider face can sometimes be pushed into place with blocking—short pieces of 2x stock nailed horizontally between the studs. Even better, use the bowed piece as plate material; a wall screw here where you fasten it down

One more tip: Use lumber right away. If you don't, even a straight piece can end up crooked. Lumber is like fish; you don't want to leave it sitting around for long.

## CREAKING PIPES

When I turn on the hot water in the bathroom I hear a scolded-dripping noise, which stops when I turn the faucet off. In the basement, the hot-boiled water supply leading to the bathroom is supported by copper nonbearing hangers driven into the joists. Pretty typical, you might say, except that there are eight of them—six hangers are six lengths of pipe 14 feet long—and each one is securely added to the pipe. Guess this team didn't see?

—FELDER, *PROSODY*, 1989, 142

**Richard Inethaway replies:** Maybe your page was visited by someone who wanted to get rid of a bunch of bloggers and practice his soldering technique at the same time. But when you describe it by no means the correct way to respect a page.

All copper hot-water supply pipes want to expand and contract as they heat up and cool down, but your pipe is dragging the soldered-on hangers right along with it. I suspect that the sound you hear everytime you factor on the hot water sounds by those hangers vibrating against the joists.

The fix is easy. Put in new supports that allow the pipe to move. You need only three of them. According to code, horizontal runs of copper pipe 1 1/2 inch in diameter or less should be spaced no more than 6 feet apart.

First, install the three new supports. You can use copper-clad pipe hangers, plastic J-hangers, or even perforated copper-clad hanger straps. Just make sure that any metal that touches the pipe is copper or copper clad to avoid unpleasant galvanic problems down the line.

Once the new supports are in, cut the legs off all the old wire hangers. But you won't have any more ones.

You can leave the old soldered portions on the pipe. They'll make an interesting artifact for future plumbers to wonder at.

## WHAT IS IT?



**A** **Camden House**

### ► **Casefile summary**

5

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### WHAT PRODUCT WHEN

**Atlantic Ocean**



• I'd like to tile the ceiling above my tub. Should I support them while the adhesive sets?

ALLIETHOCE, JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

**Mark Ferrante or Ferrante Tile regliss:** You don't need supports if you use a no-sag tileset, a cross-hatched adhesive with a latex additive. I've stuck heavy 12x12 marble tiles on a ceiling with it and they stayed without any help. This is definitely not a job for a mason, a primed organic adhesive that's convenient to use but doesn't have cement's grip. Here are some other difficulties to consider.

**THINGS**

## MAINTENANCE

## PAGE 14

- Offers remarkable strength, gloss, line and heavy film, among other kinds
- Does not support mold growth
- Has no VOC emissions
- Free-breathable, sets up in 20 minutes, apply good coats little at a time
- Unaffected by heat or water
- Shelf life of one year

## CO418

- Sold in a powder in bags that is benzimidazole
- Moves goes to waste, everything that's susceptible is dead
- Takes up to 10 days to get right concentration
- Only 11 mg supply stores offer variety of different brands

## PECE

- Good in small buckets, no mixing required
- Some unused material back into bucket - keeps up to one year
- Widely available in horse centers and hardware stores
- DIY friendly with spreader/mixer.
- Unaffected by heat.

## 504

- Not suitable for wet areas
- Emits some VOCs
- May support mold growth
- Not suitable for tiles made of glass, those larger than 10x20 or those of irregular thickness
- Must be at least 24 hours before resubstrate is used.

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tough guy.  
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cleans  
up after  
himself.



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QUESTION  
OF THE  
MONTH



My oak floors are covered in scratches. Do I have to sand down to bare wood to get rid of them?

—JANIS SANDERLAD, ARIZONA (201-07)

Floor refinisher Steve Chaloupek puts the shine back on scratched wood floors.

**Steve Chaloupek of Fast Handwood Floors** replies: Not necessarily. If the scratches don't go all the way through to the wood, you can scuff-sand your floors with a buffer and apply a fresh coat or two of finish. The process is easier and less expensive than sanding down to bare wood.

**Cost:** \$200 including buffer and rental.  
**Time:** One day to apply. Let 24 hours before recoating and a week for breathe cure.  
**Difficulty:** Moderate. Sanding the surface takes some practice.

and takes less time. In a few hours your floors will look as good as new.

The job requires using a buffer, which you can rent at a home center, and a machine to suck up dust. If you've never used a buffer before, practice in the middle of the room until you get a feel for how to maneuver it.

Once the finish is roughed up, I put on a water-based polyurethane, which can be recoated in 24 hours. Oil-based poly is cheaper, but each coat takes about 48 hours to dry. With water finish, I recommend a fresh coat every two years or whenever the floor looks worn. Stick to oil stains and your floors will never wear out.

## STEP-BY-STEP Floor refinishing

### 1. Clean the floor.

Remove the furniture and spray the floor with hardwood floor cleaner or your own mix of 10 parts water to 1 part white vinegar. Gently wipe the floor with a terry cloth rag or a towel wrapped around a mop head. Close the windows and doors to keep dust contained in the room you're sanding.



### 4. Vacuum and tack.

Leave the room for 24 to 48 minutes to let the power roller Pulva-roller 200 in the vacuum and sweep the floor using a felt-bottomed attachment. Work in the wall with the floating strips, then sweep across them to get any powder that settled between the boards. Finally, dry-brush the floor with a microfiber cloth pushed with the grain.

### 2. Prep the perimeter.

Using 150-grit sandpaper, hand-sand the perimeter of the room and any nooks. Use the buffer on the floor in the direction of the grain, overlapping each course by 6 inches. The old finish tends to powder in places, so it's easy to see the areas you've covered. Keep the buffer moving at all times. Add edge every 15 minutes or so and move the pad.



### 5. Cut in along the edges.

Cover your shoes and bottom with your new end-coat with a respirator that has organic vapor cartridges. Strain the finish through a fine filter into a clean plastic watering can. Mix a quarter load. Tack your corner boards first with a small plastic container. Brush a 3-inch wide ridge behind the boards of a joint in the floor every 2 years or so. You'll have to make it if the edge of the strip starts to dry, so stop after 10 minutes and go to Step 6.

### 3. Scuff-sand the finish.

Stick a coarse buffing pad to the buffer and put on a dust cloth. Move the buffer from side to side across the floor in the direction of the grain, overlapping each course by 6 inches. The old finish tends to powder in places, so it's easy to see the areas you've covered. Keep the buffer moving at all times. Add edge every 15 minutes or so and move the pad.



### 6. Roll out the poly.

Pour a 4 to 1 inch wide strip of finish in line with the roller—only as much as you can spread in 10 minutes. Using a long-handled roller with a 1/2-inch nap roller, roll out the finish with the grain then across. A slow dip each going and over to keep it long and edge. After 10 minutes, brush a wide finish along the edge, then pour end-coat in the 10 minutes. Continue until the floor is covered. Wait 24 hours before recoating and a week before putting back furniture.

PHOTOS: STEVE CHALOUPEK



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## Norm's tricks of the trade



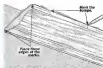
**I'd like to install  
some crown  
molding in a 1915  
house without  
cracking the  
original plaster.  
What's the trick?**

—SALLY MARSHALL,  
TRANSPORT, NY

**A** To start with, avoid using a hammer. Pounding nails can crack or weaken old plaster. Instead, I'd use a pneumatic Brad driver with a drill bit over with square drive stand-off screws; they put far less stress on the wall and ceiling material.

Just as important, you don't want to force the crown to conform to the sensitive bumps and dips in old-house walls and ceilings—usually it's the ceilings. That's why I keep a small block plane handy when installing crown, to trim the back edges as needed to get around any problems. Here's how to proceed:

**1. HOLD THE CROWN IN PLACE** and mark the spots where any bumps keep it from fitting tight against the wall or ceiling.



**2. SHAVE OFF A BIT OF THE CROWN'S BACK EDGE** at each mark with a few strokes of the plane; they hold the molding up and check the fit. It's a process of trial and error, so don't try to hog off everything at once.

**3. STOP WHEN THE GAPS GET DOWN TO 1/16-INCH.** A host of cracks will fill them very nicely.

**Q** What's the best way to repair a deep gouge in our wood floor made by a carelessly moved piano?  
—HELEN MASON IN NYC, NY

**A** Just replace the damaged surface, you probably won't have to remove a single white floorboard. The trick is to cut out the damage, then install a matching piece of flooring so that its square edge fits into the groove of the neighboring floor strip. This same technique a few weeks on tongue-and-groove siding, fencing, and engineered flooring.

**1. SCORE.** Use a sharp utility knife to scratch a square hole into a new floor strip right on the board on each side of the damaged area. This provides the surface for the new flooring and prevents expensive fill with the replacement board.

**2. SAW.** Drill a series of overlapping holes through the flooring near the score line using a speed bit. Square up the surfaced edges of the floor strip with a hand sander until you can work carefully on the board edges where you might encounter nails.



**3. REMOVE.** Set a circular saw to a depth greater than the thickness of the flooring and make two long parallel cuts about 1/4 inch apart, just the center of the board. (Check out the center portion first; then remove the two outer pieces.) Do not pry the board against the underlying floor.



**4. REPLACE.** Cut off the bottom 1/4-inch of the patch and set it in. Apply glue to the top of the patch and top the piece with a scrap woodblock. Drive the new strip in place between the grooves of the pieces below the surface with a mallet. Then cover the heads with color-matched putty.



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READER  
TOOL  
TEST

## Cordless circular saws

With record tool longevity to inspire, battery-powered circular saws empty the job of cutting plywood and lumber. We selected four of the best 18-volt saws—each equipped with a potent lithium-ion battery. 6½-inch carbide blade and rugged metal shoe and housing—then asked The Old House readers to put them to the test. Here's what they had to say. —SAL VADIA

## MAKITA BSS610

Price: \$329 with two batteries (makita.com)

**Highlight:** 17-weight saw tested.



**Tomlin Greg DeCarlo**, Jacksonville, N.C.  
**Skill level:** Pro ("I've been a contractor for 30 years.")

**Used tool for:**

Ripping 2x4s and cutting PVC and trimming aluminum storm door.

**My two cents:** The trim blade didn't cut as well as I'd like when I used it to cut the storm door.



**"Light, powerful and a lot of action!"**

## PORTER CABLE PC18C5L

Price: \$60 for saw, \$20 for battery and charger (portercable.com)  
**Highlight:** Built-in laser helps you cut straight. Blade to right of handle.



**Terber Mike Soley**, Jackson, Miss.  
**Skill level:** Beginner ("I've never used a circular saw.")

**Used tool for:**

Cutting. **My two cents:** "All the cuts, even in VET and oak, were smooth and my confidence increased the more I used the saw. The laser was accurate right out of the box."

**Tool notes:** 7.2 pounds. 18-tooth blade with 50-degree bevel capacity and 2½-inch maximum cutting depth stamped steel shoe and blade housing. 4,000 rpm.

## DEWALT DC990K

Price: \$270 with one rechargable battery, \$130 without (dewalt.com)

**Highlight:** Comes with 7-inch splitter.



**Terber Mike Soley**, Jackson, Miss.  
**Skill level:** Beginner ("I've installed doors and replaced windows.")

**Used tool for:**

Cutting plywood, 2x4s, and a full part of my two cents: "The splitter was a lifesaver on the 2x4s and it's very handy."

**Tool notes:** 8.7 pounds. 26-tooth blade with 50-degree bevel capacity and 2½-inch maximum cutting depth stamped steel shoe and blade housing. 2,700 rpm.



## BOSCH CCS180K

Price: \$335 with one battery (boschtools.com)

**Highlight:** 20-minute quick-charger is the feature of the bunch.



**Terber David Marshall**, Cheshire, Conn.  
**Skill level:** Beginner ("I completed a large room renovation, including wall and window treatments.")

**Used tool for:**

Building two planter benches out of 2x4 pressure-treated pine. **My two cents:** "I made 20 cuts and the saw performed flawlessly."

**Tool notes:** 8.6 pounds. 26-tooth blade with 50-degree bevel capacity and 2½-inch maximum cutting depth aluminum shoe and blade housing. 2,700 rpm.



Price includes manufacturer's suggested retail price.

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<b>WARRANTY</b> Three Year Warranty	Warranties generally limited parts are limited to one year by some manufacturers	Three year bumper to bumper backed by a Big, low cost old Nationwide Group only
<b>HEAT</b> More heat	Focus heat on upper 1/3 of 10' x 10' ft. 12' x 12' ft., therefore they cannot produce an even heat or heat it as long as the different which makes competitor's models less efficient	10' x 10' copper wiring on a heat sink produces more heat than any other 1500 watt infrared heater
<b>FAIR</b> Can keep on going as competitors	Worse before we get it - even to it multiple options, heat tube a life expectancy of only 1000 hours	Quiet fan with vented box frontage with an internal fan, plus hear the soundproofing
<b>HEAT TUBE</b> 10-1000 hours	Wiring is very thin with life expectancy approx. 1000 hours. Some heaters have only been on the market one year or less.	1000 plus hours with heavy duty wiring and a three year guarantee easily replaceable by dealer
<b>QUALITY</b> Good Quality	Electronic heated wires to heat cabinet with light wiring. Constructed not as a true heat sink to heat the heat sink and therefore they are not quality constructed heaters in the U.S.	We manufacture closer to heat exchangers. An high quality heavy duty components and parts. Built in quality engineering and good quality wiring. A Big, low cost old Nationwide Company (BBH) is our manufacturing partner. We are a Big, low cost old Nationwide Company (BBH) is our manufacturing partner. We are a Big, low cost old Nationwide Company (BBH) is our manufacturing partner.

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# save this old house

There's original Craftsman tilework inside!

Price: \$16,000  
Location: Syracuse, New York  
Owner: Anthony Bell  
617-669-4827

**The backstory:** Four years after architect and furniture maker Gustav Stickley elevated his famed Craftsman Workshops in Syosset, New York, architect Ward Wellington Ward came here to be part of Stickley's vision. But Ward took the Craftsman style a step further—incorporating his fondness for English castles to the 200 houses he designed for some of the city's most affluent residents. And Ward spent no expense with this 1912 home for Frank Gerrell, president of the Syracuse Lithography Company. It features a cozy single room where life takes place, and a roof with rounded angles we set to resemble a patch-style roof. The last time the grand house had been visited for the price, he poured in his design of demolishing neglect.

**Why save it?** The three bedrooms house retains all the Craftsman-inspired details that made it striking at the first place. Including the grand staircase, level built-in porch, a bathroom (with wavy) inside glass windows, and two stunning fireplaces both surrounded with tile by the Marwan Pottery & Tile Works.

**What's needed:** The house was converted to three apartments yet can easily be turned back into a single family. It also needs new heating, plumbing, and electrical systems, but your hard work will pay off once you find yourself the proud owner of a true Craftsman masterpiece.

—KATHY SPANGLER



1. The roof was designed with rounded edges to resemble the thatched roof designs in the English castle style. It was originally covered with cedar shingles that reflected long ago with English. 2. The house has a high end of the roof line that was designed to resemble a castle. 3. The structure still has its original wooden glass windows and doors. The tiles will be once decorated with new. 4. The Marwan Pottery & Tile Works in the English castle style. 5. The house is a masterpiece of the Craftsman style. The house is a masterpiece of the Craftsman style.

**Got a house?** If you're in the market for a house that's a masterpiece of the Craftsman style, this is the house for you. It's a masterpiece of the Craftsman style, and it's a masterpiece of the Craftsman style.



The house was built in 1912 and is a masterpiece of the Craftsman style. It was designed by Ward Wellington Ward, who was a student of Gustav Stickley. The house is a masterpiece of the Craftsman style, and it's a masterpiece of the Craftsman style. The house is a masterpiece of the Craftsman style, and it's a masterpiece of the Craftsman style.

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ALL THE MORE REASON TO DESIGN A FAUCET WITH A CONSCIENCE.

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\*Water Efficient Faucet - Flow Rate of 1.2 gpm versus industry standard 1.8 gpm. AED (AMERICAN EFFICIENCY DESIGN) of 1.2 gpm.



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